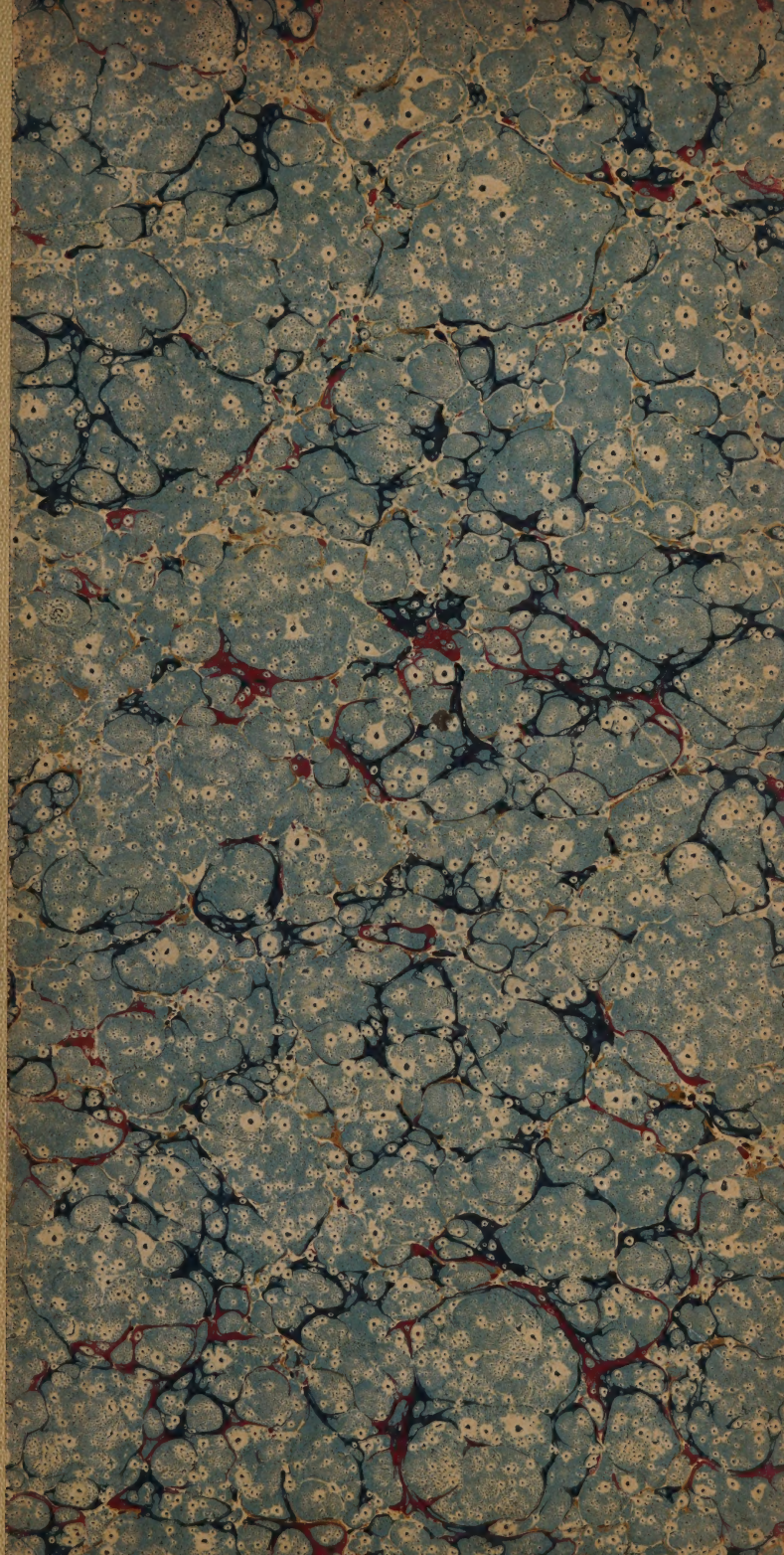




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CIRCULAR, 1826)

"Promotion of a taste for music".

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Aug. 18, 1869.

W. B. DUTTON
AND
W. B. DUTTON

DUTTON AND WENTWORTH, PRINTERS,
No. 4, Exchange Street.

BOSTON, MAY 15, 1826.

To *Walter Channing M. D.*

4053.101

SIR,

At a meeting of gentlemen held recently to consider the expediency of instituting a Society for the promotion of a taste for Music and the encouragement of the progress of this Science in this city, the undersigned were commissioned to state generally the views and purposes of the persons present, to draw an outline of a plan for the organization of such an association, and to solicit the co-operation of gentlemen, who may feel interested in the subject, in effecting what the subscribers esteem an object worthy of public favour.

The subscribers are well aware that applications to the liberal part of our community, in behalf of the favourite projects of individuals or of classes of our citizens are frequently urged upon the patronage of those, who have little concern for them, with that paternal anxiety, always felt by the originators of any design for its success, stimulated as this sometimes is by its connexion with some personal or private end.

The subscribers feel assured that it is unnecessary for them to disclaim any such interested motives. They desire to witness the establishment of the Society, of whose objects and purposes they are about to speak, not merely because they are persuaded that it will effect much towards the advancement of the art, but because they are satisfied its general influence upon the welfare of the community will be a salutary and valuable one, and they confidently believe that their estimate of its importance will not appear extravagant to those of their friends, who may be induced now, for the first time, to examine the subject.

The subscribers are sensible too, that the present period is particularly unfavourable for the collection of funds for the support of any new Institution. They trust, however, that the liberal disposition of those who are at any time ready to contribute to objects of public improvement is not exhausted, even by the late most generous endowment of one of our best Institutions, and that if the plan they are about to develop receive the approbation of those whom they address, they need present no other inducements to secure their patronage of it.

The objects of the Society which we propose to institute are, to promote the cultivation of the Science of Music, to afford means and present encouragement for the exhibition of musical talent, and to advance the growth and diffusion of an *enlightened* taste in this department of the Fine Arts. An amount sufficient to warrant the commencement of this enterprize being first subscribed, it is intended to call a meeting of the contributors, at which a constitution will be formed on such

principles as may be determined on by the majority present. The subscribers have thought however, that a sketch of a few articles, which might serve as a basis for such an instrument, would be the simplest and most direct means of furnishing more particular information as to the amount of funds, which it is desirable to raise, and the manner in which they propose to effect the objects of the Society. Such a sketch they offer herewith.

1. Contributors of any sum not less than one hundred dollars shall be styled Life-subscribers, and be entitled to be present at all Concerts, Rehearsals and other meetings of the Society.

2. The President, Vice President, Directors and all other officers of the Society, (except a sub-committee charged with the management of the Concerts and other musical exhibitions, who shall be appointed by the Directors) shall be chosen annually from the list of Life-subscribers.

3. All the by-laws and regulations of the Society shall be framed by the Directors, subject however to be repealed by two thirds of the Life-subscribers. The Directors shall be also charged with the management of the funds of the Society, and with the general control of the Concerts, and musical exhibitions, and they are not to be personally responsible for the contracts of the sub-committee.

4. Professors of music, who may become members of the Society by subscribing their names to the Constitution and By-Laws, and engaging entirely to conform to the Laws and Regulations of the Institution, are to be styled Associates. They are to be fully compensated for

their services, and they or their families in case of their death are to be entitled at the end of

three	}	years to the sum of	}	dollars,
five				dollars,
seven				dollars,
ten				dollars,

such term to be computed from the time of their subscription to the Constitution, provided however that they comply strictly during the term of their membership with such engagement.

5. dollars from the sum raised by subscription shall be invested as soon as may be after the organization of the Society, and be pledged to the specific object of raising the endowments mentioned in the last article.

6. The annual expenses of the Society, such as the rent of a concert-room, the regular salaries of the Associates, &c. shall be defrayed by the sale of tickets of admission to the public Concerts to annual subscribers and to non-subscribers, on such terms as may be hereafter determined on.

7. The number and character of the musical exhibitions of the Society must of course depend on the degree of patronage it receives, but it is hoped that its resources will enable it to give a series of Concerts the next season.

The subscribers do not think it necessary to go into any general argument in favour of this elegant species of amusement. It is however obvious to remark that the pleasures it affords, if not of the highest intellectual order, are of the purest and most refined character, and

that they are not liable to any of the exceptions which may be taken to other popular public amusements.

To persons who think public amusements altogether undeserving the patronage and the interest of those whose example is constantly exercising a powerful influence in society, the subscribers do not address themselves. They conceive public amusements indispensable in large societies, and they think it no trifling service to good morals, to aid in rendering those attractive which are perfectly innocent, which are of a nature to polish the manners, which are not peculiar to any sex or age, and the enjoyment of which "leaves no regret behind."

"L'amusement est un des premiers besoins de l'homme," says Voltaire, "The first consideration with a legislator is, that this amusement should be innocent; the next, that it be not below the dignity of a rational creature."*

Our city is, considering its population and its resources, singularly deficient in public amusements. Our Theatre, except during the visits of the eminent artists of Europe, or of other cities in the United States, is hardly supported, and the talent of the regular dramatic corps, whatever it may be, owes little to the support of that class of society which elsewhere contributes most largely to the Treasury of the Theatre. There is a double disadvantage to the Theatre in this want of patronage, as the amusements it offers are deprived of the countenance of a numerous portion of the community, and as the same circumstance prevents the engagement of the highest order of talent.

* Burney's Hist. of Mus. vol. I, p. 485, Note.

We do not hazard much in saying that no better service could be rendered to a society like ours, than the introduction of a course of public amusements, which should be not only suited to our tastes, but perfectly unexceptionable in their influence and results. "He must be a rigid censor indeed, who blames such pleasures as these, which have nothing contrary in them to virtue and strict morality."*

In a metropolis populous as ours, and situated too in the centre of a circle of closely inhabited and rapidly increasing towns, which assist in supporting all our public amusements, we cannot think the effort to introduce one so attractive as we trust this will prove, a premature one.† Nor is there any one, whose interest is associated with the growth of our city, unconcerned in a project which will add to its resources and its prosperity.

That indications of a highly cultivated taste for music are rare in our community does not seem to us a reason for not attempting to form or improve it. It is not to be expected that nature should endow us with a taste for this any more than for any other of the Fine Arts. This is only to be acquired by cultivation, and good models are as essential to him, who would make himself a musician, as to him, who aspires to eminence in Painting or Sculpture.

If too we would multiply the resources and add to the attractions of *Home* by acquiring or exciting in our

* Pope in note on IX. Odys. 3. Pope it is well known was no admirer of Music. Ex ore hostis,

† The population of Boston according to the Census of 1825, and of the towns situated at a distance not exceeding 15 miles, according to the Census of 1820, is nearly 140,000.

young friends a taste for a pleasure which only one infirmity can deprive us of, let us encourage the establishment of an Institution, the direct effect of which will be to draw around us eminent artists in this Profession, and to increase our own capacity of relishing their performances.

Our country is indeed sometimes denied the power of appreciating correctly, great musical talent. We are yet too rude and uninformed, it is said, to comprehend the merit of fine specimens of any of the arts, and it were idle for us to think of imitating the example of Europe, in patronizing them. But is no forward movement ever to be made? Shall the best specimens never be exhibited, because we are not competent entirely to appreciate their value? Shall we refuse to learn to walk, because the first step requires the aid of others?

We cannot admit either that the fact, that a taste for good music is an acquired one, that it involves a process of training, and a discipline of the ear, is an objection to it. This is true of every refined source of amusement. Our range of pleasurable sensations will be narrow indeed, if confined to the circle we share in common with those, whose sensibility no cultivation has warmed, and whose mental powers no habit of intellectual occupation has elevated.

It is said too, that in a community where music cannot be supported by those to whose peculiar gratification it ministers, and without the aid of the public, there can be no great susceptibility of the pleasures it affords.

There is no country in Europe however, where such an inference would not be as just as it is here, for there is none, where the best exhibitions of this art are not

patronized, and almost maintained by the Government. The grand Opera at Naples, would not exist a day after the munificent support of the Crown was withdrawn. In Paris, the five principal Theatres (three of which are devoted exclusively to musical entertainments) it is well known, are not only protected from loss, but conducted entirely by the Government, and the Italian Opera in London must have been closed long since, but for the sacrifices of the wealthy and liberal patrons of the art in England.

Hints for improvement in mental and physical education have been recently adopted in several of our best schools, and at the University, taken from the Country in Europe where the theory of education has perhaps been a subject of more attention than in any other.

One other practice in the instruction of youth almost universal in Germany, we would be glad to see introduced into the United States, that of furnishing all classes with an opportunity of making some proficiency in music. Such an addition to our regular course of discipline would, we are persuaded, be attended with the most salutary moral influence.

In New-York and Philadelphia, societies having the same object with that which we propose to organize, have already been formed, and their present condition is such as fully to justify the anticipations of their founders. We will not then suffer ourselves to apprehend that in this city, so distinguished as it is by its wealth, its benevolent and literary institutions, its admirable system of schools, and the refinement of its society, an effort to elevate our standard of excellence in that department of the arts which is, beyond dispute, within the reach of a

greater number of persons than any other, and to procure for ourselves and our friends an unexceptionable, elegant and refined resource, will be suffered to fail or languish for want of encouragement. A combination of means and union of purpose is alone wanting to secure the success of the undertaking. We in this country fortunately hold in our own hands the resources which in Europe are possessed by individuals who happen to be entitled by their birth to control the revenues of a nation. Let not the stigma be attached to our free institutions, that a judicious patronage of the arts is not to be expected in a country where this fortunate division of property exists.

Such are some of the reasons which have led the subscribers to the conclusion that the beneficial tendency of an *enlightened* taste for music makes its advancement a subject of general interest, and they hope that the same sentiment may have been produced in your mind by the foregoing remarks.

The impression, that a particular interest in this Association implies a peculiar quickness of perception of the merit of specimens of the art, if it should be a general one, would be fatal to this enterprize. We do not assume the character of Amateurs in Music, because we would do something for its encouragement, any more than we claim to be men of Science, when we subscribe to a Scientific Library, or should pretend to be Connoisseurs in Painting, if we were to associate for the purpose of forming a Public Gallery. We wish it to be distinctly understood, that our object is to promote a taste, of which we do not profess to have more than others of the community.

Of the amount of funds which it might be desirable to collect, the subscribers cannot speak definitely. A

sum larger than any which will probably be obtained could, they think, be well appropriated in promoting the objects of the Society. Ten thousand dollars is however the smallest amount, with which it would be prudent in their opinion to commence this undertaking. Unless this sum is subscribed therefore, they deem it inexpedient to organize the Society. Gentlemen who concur in the views of the undersigned, and are disposed to unite with them in carrying into effect the plan they have proposed, will not accordingly be called on for their subscriptions, unless this sum be subscribed.

The undersigned respectfully request that as soon as convenient, you would advise them of your intentions relative to the subject on which they have addressed you, and remain,

Your obedient Servants,

W. SULLIVAN,
W. PRESCOTT,
J. QUINCY,
J. C. WARREN,
P. T. JACKSON,
N. APPLETON,
I. THORNDIKE, jun.
H. G. OTIS, jun.
W. H. ELIOT.

